

FEATURE STORY: AN **EXCLUSIVE** LOOK INTO THE FUTURE
OF SONIC AND THE FREEDOM FIGHTERS!

MOBIUS
25 YEARS LATER



SEGA

ISSUE

4

SONIC

SUPER SPECIAL



BenBites

SONIC SUPER SPECIAL

PRESENTS
A LOOK BACK AT

MOBIUS 25 YEARS LATER

THE FUTURE UNFOLDS



"The best thing about the future is that it comes one day at a time..." – Abraham Lincoln

All things considered, "Mobius 25 Years Later" was a pretty ambitious project.

With 238+ issues, at least 6 books in-universe (2 carrying the name "Super Special"), several miniseries and a score of graphic novels, Sonic the Hedgehog is still running strong bringing enjoyment to kids everywhere! But what about its future?

In the very first Sonic Special – "Sonic: In Your Face" – Princess Sally led the Freedom Fighters into Robotnik's territory, fighting monsters and robots alike to discover the legacy left by Sally's teacher. One that Sally would never understand...until the far future. There we saw the fates of Sonic, Sally, Rotor, Antione, Bunnie and even a wizened King Acorn. As an epilogue of sorts, in Sonic the Hedgehog #23 we even saw a glimpse of Sonic and Sally's then unnamed children as the seeds of what would become "Mobius 25 Years Later," and the threat of time collapsing in on itself, were sown....

"25 Years Later" was an attempt to revisit that future and witness the happy days fans imagined the characters to have. The threat of Dr. Robotnik was no more. Sonic and Sally's children were named

Manik and Sonia in honor of Sonic's "brother and sister" from the then-airing Sonic Underground cartoon. Knuckles had his own kid named Lara-Su. The characters had settled into mundane trivialities like every day people and everyone we'd grown up reading between "In Your Face" and the start of the back-up stories had grown up. Meanwhile, the skies grew darker and darker.

Sonic yearned for his days of adventure, Knuckles struggled with raising a daughter whom he was hesitant to let follow in his footsteps, and in a rather off-the-wall choice, Tails somehow formed a bond with Mina and had kids of his own. The future wasn't quite what we had in mind. Meanwhile, amongst the day-to-day humdrum living – none of the characters were prepared for the day that time wound up unraveling itself. King Sonic was elected to go into the timestream and fix whatever it was that caused the problem – not knowing that Lara-Su was defying





her dad's wishes and stowed along for the ride.

And then – just like that – it ended. We went back to Present Sonic and Tails and it was all a dream...

Until, many issues later, when new writer Ian Flynn and new editor Mike Pellerito decided to revisit the story and open the world of the future up for more.

Suddenly, the once serene future was twisted on its ear. Sonic's trip to fix the future's unraveling had wound up wiping him out of time entirely. With no Sonic, Shadow was left to be the hero of Mobius. And with no snarky hedgehog to temper his surly demeanor, Shadow went from a surly hero to a well-intentioned extremist. The tone of the story changed and for the first time, King Sonic – penniless, without his title, without his family, without the exploits and bravado – recognized everything he'd lost in that one impulsive moment to gain his former glory back. Little

known fact – a certain part of the story had to be tempered down because, at the time, it was almost too heart-wrenching on our hero.

Sonic, Tails and Knuckles became the triple threat again to bring adventure back to a stagnant future gone terribly dark. In the end, King Shadow was defeated and peace reigned true once more. Sonic started life anew, but this time – he did it right and learned that you can have adventure AND appreciate the joy that life has given you.

If you picked up the "Sonic Universe - Book 2: Mobius 30 Years Later" trade, you'll know that King Shadow escaped and is somewhere out there in the timeline...watching...waiting. But now, heroes of the future and the past – will be out there to stop him and bring him to his senses!

And that's not all – because now there are two futures! M30YL's "Light Mobius" and the even stranger Enerjak-controlled "Dark Mobius" as witnessed by time traveler Silver the Hedgehog in "Sonic Universe 25-28: The Silver Saga". What do two futures mean? How can a world have two futures? Could there be more? And how do they all culminate into the horrible world-shattering, constantly changing era that Silver the Hedgehog calls home? You'll have to keep reading issues of Sonic the Hedgehog and Sonic Universe to find out!

But we're not worried! Because until that day comes...the future's so bright that we've all gotta wear shades. ■ **Jonathan Gray**

SONIC

SUPER DIGEST

»»» PRESENTS
The Sonic Spin!

FEATURES THE TALENTS OF

IAN FLYNN, PATRICK SPAZIANTE, TRACY YARDLEY!, BEN BATES,
JAMAL PEPPERS, JONATHAN GRAY, JASON JENSEN, MATT HERMS,
TERRY AUSTIN, JIM AMASH, JOHN WORKMAN and TERESA DAVIDSON



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FEATURES CONTRIBUTIONS AND BOOK DESIGN	JONATHAN H. GRAY
SPECIAL THANKS TO	ANTHONY GACCIONE & CINDY CHAU @ SEGA LICENSING



FEATURED FAN ART



Ashley D.
from Texas



Toby B.
from Texas

NEXT TIME IN...

SONIC

SUPER DIGEST

»»» **SUPER PREVIEW**

Episode Five!

JUMP FOR JOY!

Next issue leads off with a **BRAND NEW STORY** adapting SEGA's hit Sonic mobile game:

**SONIC
JUMP**

Don't walk *or* run! This time, **JUMP** like a blue hedgehog to your nearest comic store for your copy of **SONIC SUPER DIGEST #5!**

**SEE YOU
NEXT ISSUE!**

CHECK OUT THESE TITLES ALSO COMING SOON!



A STICKER SPECTACULAR!

**THE SONIC SUPER SPECIAL MAGAZINE IS BACK
AND THIS TIME WITH STICKERS! PEEL AND
STICK YOUR FAVORITE SONIC CHARACTERS
ANYWHERE AND EVERYWHERE!**

SONIC UNIVERSE#55 (On sale in AUGUST)

SONIC #252 (On sale in SEPTEMBER)

SONIC SUPER SPECIAL #8 (on sale in AUGUST)

Don't miss it!



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SONIC SUPER SPECIAL

INTERVIEW WITH - STEVEN BUTLER - ARTIST -

SSSM: Steven, you are the longest running (ha!) Sonic the Hedgehog interior penciler in the comics nineteen-year history! You're in such esteemed company as Spaz, Jim Amash, and James Fry! What got you started in comic's?

SB: Ha!! Now you're making me feel old!! Anyway, I've always loved comic books, since way before the days of comic book shops -- when you could find them in spinner racks at the local pharmacy and/or grocery store. I loved superhero stuff the best, but I also loved westerns, horror, and the humor stuff. I remember sitting around on the living room floor copying the figures from the panels. I guess you could say comics were what got me into art. I was always known as "the guy that draws stuff," but didn't really think I could make a living from drawing comics until my college years at the University of Southern Mississippi. It was toward the end of the 90's that I started working for particular company with which I am still associated, and who publishes the adventures of a certain blue speedster.

SSSM: Your style marked a departure for the Sonic comics into a more detail-oriented art style. Your style was one of the key influences on the overall tone of the comic as it transitioned from a humor title to a superhero book. How did you happen upon your first Sonic penciling gig, and what were some of your Sonic stylistic inspirations?

SB: Hmmm, well I wish I could say it was all a "grand scheme" on my part to change the tone of the Sonic comic to a superhero book, but I'm afraid I'd be lying. Here's how it started -- In 1997, I got a call from Pam Eklund, who was my inker on another comic title. She was inking the Sonic the Hedgehog book for Archie, and asked me if I'd be interested in doing some work on the title. I told her I was indeed interested, and she gave me the editor's info. I called him up, and he gave me a back up to draw (featuring that nasty no-goodnik Ixis Naugus), and the next thing I knew, I was the regular penciler on the book for an extended run. My initial run is being collected in the

Sonic Archives right now, and that, too, makes me feel old -- ha! Since then, I've drawn the title on an off-and-on basis, and I've seen many changes happen on the book -- both to the storylines and the characters. I have loved every minute of it. I'm hoping I get to continue drawing the Sonic title in some form or fashion for a long time. As for "changing the tone," I don't think I can really take credit for that. I remember seeing the original Sonic Super Special "Mecha Madness" and being blown away with how good it was. Patrick Spaziante hit the art on that one out of the park, and I suppose it was the look of that one book that set the tone for me as I started drawing my run. So, hats off to Patrick Spaziante -- he started it!!

SSSM: Your Sonic model has evolved over time, can you tell us a little bit about how your style reflects the current world of Sonic, while still maintaining the look and feel of the book's history?

SB: Hoo boy!! Confession time -- this'll probably get rotten



STEVEN BUTLER
LONG-TIME SONIC PENCILLER



THE BEGINNING

BUTLER'S EARLIEST WORK AS SEEN
IN STH #61, WHICH IS COLLECTED IN
SONIC ARCHIVES VOL. 16, AVAILABLE NOW!



tomatoes thrown at me from the fans, but here goes- I'm not a video game player, and have never played a Sonic game all the way through to the end (Whoa!! Duck!! Here come the tomatoes!!). Seriously, I'm from another generation, and just never caught the bug. However, my kids are avid video game players, and Sonic is their favorite character, of course, so I keep up with pretty much everything that comes out concerning the characters.

Pretty much my entire relationship with Sonic is from working on the Archie Comic. I've changed my work a little to reflect the current look of

the characters as established by Tracy, Ben, and Jamal. Working on the Sonic X books helped in that regard too, because we had to draw the characters more on "model" with the TV series. It kind of gently forced me to refine my style to suit the modern look. I guess that's one of the things that I like about drawing the book for so long -- it's always reinventing itself story-wise and especially visually -- always staying fresh and exciting. (Still have a soft spot for the Dave Manak/ Art Mawhinney days, too!)

SSSM: You've worked extensively on the "25 Years Later" story re-presented in this very magazine! Can you tell us a little about how you went about designing the future of planet Mobius?

SB: Ahhh!! Now you're taxing my brain! Let's see, I remember really enjoying drawing Knuckles with the Australian cowboy hat and the bionic eye. I suppose I tried my best to "futurize" things as much as possible. Making Rotor look really old was a fun departure. I also remember really enjoying drawing the kids of Sonic and Knuckles a lot. I remember that series being very character-driven, without a lot of over-the-top action, which I'm better known for. It was a challenge for me, to keep it interesting in the quiet moments. Since then, I've done quite a

few more of those kinds of character-driven stories, but I believe the "25 Years Later" run was a first for me. I'm pretty proud of the way it turned out.

SSSM: You've got some awesome stories coming up in the Sonic the Hedgehog title slated for release throughout the summer months -- any teasers for the fans out there?

SB: Lots of intense action! Rotor has his time to shine! (Love drawing him in that cool bio-battle suit he wears now) Elias and the Secret Freedom Fighters kick all kinds of robotic rear ends!! I could go on, but I won't! Pick up a copy and judge for yourself!!



AWESOME ART!

STEVEN IS DIVERSE IN MANY MEDIUMS OF ART, ASIDE FROM HIS USUAL PENCIL WORK.

